

Remarks

Upon entry of the foregoing amendment, claims 1 - 25 are pending in the application, with claims 1, 3-7, 9, and 12 being the independent claims. New claims 13 - 25 are sought to be added. The claims have been amended to bring them into conformity with U.S. claim drafting conventions. These changes are believed to introduce no new matter, and their entry is respectfully requested.

Support for the amendment to the claims, as well as for new claims 13 - 25, is found, *inter alia*, in the claims as originally filed.

Conclusion

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Preliminary Amendment is respectfully requested. Applicants believe the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Respectfully submitted,

STERNE, KESSLER, GOLDSTEIN & FOX P.L.L.C.



Katrina Y. Pei Quach
Agent for Applicants
Registration No. 51,063

Date: January 5, 2005

1100 New York Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005-3934
(202) 371-2600